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The Mystical Interpretation of Christmas

MAX HEINDEL

The Rosicrucian Fellowship

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The Mystical Interpretation of Christmas

MAX HEINDEL

FIVE DISSERTATIONS UPON THE SUBJECT OF CHRISTMAS FROM THE VIEWPOINT OF THE MYSTIC, SHOWING THE OCCULT SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS GREAT EVENT

FIRST EDITION

ROSICRUCIAN FELLOWSHIP
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Preface

The contents of this book were sent in letter form to students from time to time by the author. They comprise only five of his ninety-nine epistles. The principal feature of these lessons is the mystic birth and death of the great Christ Spirit, given from the viewpoint of a seer. The author received these rare gems of truth through divine illumination. The most pronounced materialist must become convinced of the divinity of man after reading this writer's revelations on the inner significance of the Christ and the principles which He proclaimed.

Seventeen of these booklets have been printed in book form under the title, "The Web of Destiny"; including "The Occult Effect of Our Emotions", "Prayer,—A Magic Invocation", and "Practical Methods of Achieving Success." Nine have been published on the subject of "Freemasonry and Catholicism", as viewed from behind the scenes. The remaining sixty-eight lessons will be published in book form as time permits.

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We hope that the perusal of this volume on the holy life of Christ will stimulate a greater veneration for the Christian religion, now made acceptable to the reason through the inspired work of this author, whose greatest aim while he lived was to bring the Christ ideal and the simple life of service closer to the hearts of the people.

Mrs. Max Heindel.

Oct. 28, 1920.

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I

The Cosmic Significance of Christmas

Once more in the course of a year we are upon the eve of Christmas. Dissimilar is the view which each of us takes of this festival from that of every one else. To the devout religionist it is a season hallowed, sacred, and fraught with mystery, none the less sublime because uncomprehended. To the atheist it is a silly superstition. To the purely intellectual it is a puzzle, for it is beyond reason.

In the churches the story is recited of how upon this, the holiest night of the year, our Lord and Savior, immaculately conceived, was born of a virgin. No further explanation is made, the matter is left to acceptance or rejection by the hearer according to his temperament. If mind and reason dominate him to the exclusion of faith, if he can believe nothing which cannot be demonstrated to the senses at any moment, he is forced to reject the tale as absurd and out of consonance with various immutable laws of nature.

Various interpretations have been given to satisfy the mind, these principally of an astronomical nature. They have set forth how, on the night between the 24th and the 25th of December, the sun commences its journey from the south to the north. He is the "Light of the World." Cold and famine would inevitably exterminate the human race if the sun remained always in the south. Therefore it is a cause for great rejoicing when he commences his northward journey. He is then hailed as "savior," for he comes "to save the world," to give it "the bread of life," as he ripens grain and grape. Thus "he gives his life" upon the cross (ing) of the equator (at the spring equinox), and then commences his ascent into the (northern) heaven. On the night when he commences his northward journey the zodiacal sign Virgo, the celestial virgin, the "Queen of Heaven," stands upon the eastern horizon at midnight, and is therefore, astrologically speaking, his "rising sign." Thus he is "born of a virgin" without other intermediary, hence, "immaculately conceived."

This explanation may satisfy the mind regarding the *origin* of the supposed superstition, but the aching void which is in the heart of every skeptic, wheth-

er he is aware of the fact or not, must remain until the spiritual illumination is attained which shall furnish an explanation acceptable to both heart and mind. To shed such light upon this sublime mystery shall be our endeavor in the following pages. The immaculate conception will form the topic of a future lesson; just now we will show how the material and spiritual forces alternately ebb and flow in the course of the year, and why Christmas is truly a "holy day."

Let us say that we subscribe to the astronomical interpretation as being as valid from its point of view, as the following is true when viewing the mystery-birth from another angle. The sun is born from year to year in the darkest night. The world-saving Christs are also born when the spiritual darkness of mankind is the greatest. There is a third aspect of supreme importance, namely that it is no mere idle foolishness when Paul speaks of Christ being "formed in you." It is a sublime fact that we are all Christs-in-the-making, and the sooner we realize that we must cultivate the Christ *within* before we can perceive the Christ without, the more we shall hasten the day of our spiritual illumination. In this

connection we again quote our favorite aphorism from Angelus Silesius, whose sublime spiritual perception caused him to say:

"Though Christ a thousand times in Bethlehem be born,
And not within thyself, thy soul will be forlorn;
The Cross on Golgotha thou lookest to in vain,
Unless within thyself it be set up again."

At the *summer solstice* in June the earth is furthest from the sun, but the solar ray strikes the earth at nearly *right angles* to its axis in the Northern Hemisphere, hence the high degree of *physical activity* resulting. Then the *spiritual* radiations from the sun are *oblique* to this part of the earth, and are as weak as the physical rays when they are oblique.

At the *winter solstice,* on the other hand, the earth is nearest the sun. The spiritual rays then fall at right angles to the earth's surface in the Northern Hemisphere, *promoting spirituality,* while physical activities are held in abeyance on account of the oblique angle at which the solar rays strike the surface of the earth. On this principle, the physical activities are at their lowest ebb and the spiritual forces reach their

highest tidal flow on the night between the 24th and 25th of December, which is therefore the most "holy night" of the year. Midsummer, on the other hand, is the sporting time of the earth-goblins and similar entities concerned in the material development of our planet, as shown by Shakespeare in his "*Midsummer Night's Dream.*"

If we swim with the tide at the time when it is strongest, we shall cover a greater distance with less effort than at any other time. It is of great importance to the esoteric student to know and understand the particularly favorable conditions which prevail at Yule-tide. Let us follow Paul's exhortation in the 11th chapter of Hebrews and throw aside every hampering weight as do men who are running a race. Let us strike while the iron is hot; let us specially bend all our energies at this time to spiritual endeavor, and we shall reap a harvest such as we cannot obtain at any other time of the year.

Let us remember also that self-improvement is not our first consideration. We are disciples of Christ. If we aspire to distinction, let us remember that He said: "Let him who would be the greatest among you be THE SERVANT of all." There is much

sorrow and suffering around us; there are many lonely and aching hearts in our circle of acquaintances. Let us seek them out in an unobtrusive manner. At no time of the year will they be more amenable to our advances than just now. Let us strive to spread sunshine in their path. Thus we shall earn their blessings and the blessings of our Elder Brothers. The resulting vibrations in turn will cause a spiritual growth not to be attained in any other way.

II

Spiritual Light---
The New Element
And The New Substance

Last year our correspondence course in Mystic Christianity was started with a lesson on Christmas from the cosmic point of view. It was explained that the summer and winter solstices together with the vernal and fall equinoxes form turning points in the life of the Great Earth Spirit, as *conception* marks the commencement of the human spirit's descent into the earthly body, resulting in *birth,* which inaugurates the period of growth until *maturity* is reached. At that point an epoch of mellowing and ripening has its inception, together with a decline of the physical energies which terminates in *death.* That event frees man from the trammels of matter and ushers in the season of spiritual metabolism whereby our harvest of earthly experiences are transmuted to soul powers, talents, and tendencies, to be put to usury in future lives, that we may grow more abundantly rich in such treasures, and be found worthy as "faithful stewards" to fill greater and greater posts among the servants in the Father's House.

This illustration rests upon the secure foundation of the great law of analogy, so tersely expressed in the Hermetic axiom, "As above, so below." Upon this, the master-key to all spiritual problems, we shall also depend for an "open sesame" to our lesson on Christmas this year, which we hope may correct, confirm, or complete previous views on the part of our students, as each requires.

The bodies originally crystallized in the terrible temperature of Lemuria were too hot to contain sufficient moisture to allow the spirit free and unrestricted access to all parts of their anatomy, as it has at present by means of circulating blood. Later, in early Atlantis they had, indeed, blood, but it moved only with difficulty and would have dried quickly because of the high internal temperature, save for the fact that an abundance of moisture was supplied by the watery atmosphere which then prevailed. Inhalation of this solvent gradually lessened the heat and softened the body until a sufficient quantity of moisture could be retained within to allow of respiration in the comparatively dry atmosphere which later obtained.

The earlier Atlantean bodies were of a grained and stringy substance, not unlike our present tendons and

also resembling wood, but in time flesh eating enabled man to assimilate sufficient albumen to build elastic tissue necessary for the formation of lungs and arteries so as to allow unrestricted circulation of the blood, such as now obtains in the human system. By the time these changes within and without had taken place, the grand and glorious seven-colored bow appeared in the rain-laden sky to mark the advent of *The Kingdom of Men* where conditions were to be as varied as the hues into which its atmosphere refracted the uni-colored light of the sun. Thus the first appearance of the bow in the clouds marked the commencement of the Noachian age with its alternating seasons and periods of which Christmas is one.

The conditions prevailing in this age are not permanent, however, any more than those of previous ages. The process of condensation which transformed the fire fog of Lemuria into the dense moist atmosphere of Atlantis, and later liquefied it into the water which flooded the cavities of the earth and drove mankind to the highlands, is still going on. Both the atmosphere and our own physiological condition are changing, heralding to the seeing eye and the understanding mind the dawn of a new day upon the

horizon of time, an age of unification called in the Bible, *The Kingdom of God.*

The Bible does not leave us in doubt concerning the changes. Christ said that as it was in the days of Noah so should it be in that day. Science and invention are both now finding conditions not previously met. It is a scientific fact that oxygen is being consumed at an alarming rate to feed the fires of industry; forest fires are also drawing enormously upon our stock of this important element, besides adding to the drying up process which the atmosphere is naturally undergoing. Eminent scientists have pointed out that a day must come when the globe cannot sustain life depending upon water or air for existence. Their ideas have not excited much anxiety as the day they have named is so far in the future; but though the day be distant, the doom of Aryana is as inevitable as that of the flooded Atlantis.

Could an Atlantean be transferred to our atmosphere, he would be asphyxiated as are fish taken from their native element. Scenes viewed in the Memory of Nature prove that the pioneer aviators of that time actually did faint when they encountered one of the air streams which gradually descended upon the land which they inhabited, and their experience caused

much comment and speculation. The aviators of today are already encountering the new element and experiencing asphyxia as did our Atlantean forbears, and for analogous reasons—they have encountered *a new element* descending from above, which will take the place of oxygen in our atmosphere. There is *a new substance* also entering the human frame which will supersede albumen. Moreover, as the aviators of ancient Atlantis fainted and were prevented by descending air currents from entering Aryana, the promised land, prematurely, so will the new element baffle present day aviators as well as mankind in general until all have learned to assimilate its material aspects. And as the Atlanteans whose lungs were undeveloped perished in the flood, so will also the new age find some without the "wedding garment" and therefore unfit to enter until they shall have qualified at a later time. It is therefore of the greatest importance to all to know about the new element and the new substance. The Bible and science combined furnish ample information upon the subject.

We have stated before that in ancient Greece, religion and science were taught in the mystery temples, together with the fine arts and crafts, as one united

doctrine of life and being, but that this condition is now temporarily abrogated to facilitate certain phases of development. The unity of religions and scientific language in ancient Greece made these matters comparatively easy of comprehension, but today complications have set in owing to the fact that religion has *translated* and science merely *transferred* their terms from the original Greek, which has caused many seeming disagreements and a loss of the link between the discoveries of science and the teachings of religion.

To arrive at the desired knowledge concerning physiological changes now going on in our system, we may call to mind the teachings of science that the frontal lobes of the brain are among the most recent developments of the human structure, and make that organ in man enormously larger proportionately than in any other creature. Now let us ask ourselves: Is there in the brain any substance peculiar to that organ, and, if so, what may be its significance?

The first part of the question may be answered by reference to any scientific textbook bearing upon the subject, but the Rosicrucian Cosmo-Conception (p. 452) gives more, and we quote from it as follows:

"The brain * * * is built of the same substances as are all the other parts of the body, but *with the addition of phosphorus*, which is peculiar to the brain alone. The logical conclusion is that phosphorus is the particular element by means of which the Ego is able to express thought * * * The proportion and variation of this substance are found to correspond to the state and stage of intelligence of the individual. Idiots have very little phosphorus, shrewd thinkers have much. * * * It is therefore of great importance that the aspirant who is to use his body for mental and spiritual work should supply his brain with this substance necessary for that purpose."

The indisputable religiousness of Catholics is partly traceable to their practice of eating fish on Fridays and during Lent, which are rich in phosphorus. Though fish are a low order of life, the Rosicrucian Cosmo-Conception does not approve of killing them but refers the student to certain vegetables as a means of *physically* obtaining an abundance of this desirable substance. There are other and better ways not mentioned in the Cosmo-Conception, as it would have been a digression there.

It was not by chance that teachers of the Grecian Mystery School thus named that luminous substance which we know as phosphorus. To them it was patent that "God is *Light*"—the Greek word is *phos*. They therefore most appropriately named the sub-

stance in the brain which is the avenue of ingress of the divine impulse, *phos-phorus;* literally, "light bearer." In the measure that we are capable of assimilating that substance, we become filled with light and commence to shine from within, a halo surrounding us as a mark of sainthood. The phosphorus, however, is only a physical medium which enables the spiritual light to express through the physical brain, the light itself being the product of soul growth. But soul growth enables the brain to assimilate an increasing amount of phosphorus; hence the method of acquiring this substance in large quantity is not by chemical metabolism, but by an alchemical process of soul growth, thoroughly explained by Christ in His discourse to Nicodemus:

"God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world. * * * He that believeth on Him is not condemned, but he that believeth not is condemned already. * * And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light. * * * For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved. But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought of God."—(John 3:17-21).

Christmas is the season of greatest spiritual light. During this age of alternating cycles there is an ebb

and flow of the spiritual light as well as of the waters in the ocean. The early Christian church marked the conception in the fall of the year, and to this day the event is celebrated in the Catholic church when the great wave of spiritual life and light commences its descent into the earth. The flood tide is reached at Christmas, which is therefore truly the holy season of the year, the time when this spiritual light is most easily contacted and specialized by the aspirant through deeds of mercy, kindness, and love. Nor are opportunities lacking to even the poorest, for, as so often emphasized in the Rosicrucian teachings, service counts more than financial assistance, which may be a detriment to the recipient. From those, however, to whom much is given, much will be required, and if any one has been blessed with an abundance of the world's goods, *a careful dispensation of the same* would necessarily accompany whatever physical service he may render. Let us further remember the words of the Christ: "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these, my brethren, ye have done it unto me." Thus we shall follow Him as burning and shining lights, showing the way to the New Era.

III

The Annual Sacrifice of Christ

Have you ever stood by the bedside of a friend or relative who was about to pass out of this world and into the beyond? Most of us have, for where is the house that has not been entered by Father Time? Neither is the following phase of the occurrence, to which we would particularly direct attention, uncommon. The person about to pass out very often falls into a stupor, then awakens and sees not only this world but the world into which he is about to enter; and it is very significant that then he sees people who were his friends or relatives during the earlier part of his life—sons, daughters, a wife, anyone in fact near and dear to him—standing around the bedside and awaiting his crossing over. The mother will fondly stretch out her arms: "Why, there is John, and how big he has grown! What a splendid big boy he is!" And so she will recognize one after another of her children who have passed

into the beyond. They are assembled at her bedside, waiting for her to join them, actuated by the same feeling that possesses people here when a child is about to be born into this world, making them rejoice at the new arrival because they feel instinctively that it is a friend who is coming to them.

So, also, the people who have gone before into the beyond gather when a friend is about to cross the border line and join them on the other side of the veil. Thus we see that the birth into one world is death from the viewpoint of another—the child that comes to us has died to the spiritual world, and the person who passes out of our ken into the beyond and dies here is born into a new world and joins his friends there.

As above, so below; the law of analogy which is the same for microcosm and macrocosm tells us that what befalls human beings under given conditions must also apply to the superhuman under analogous circumstances. We are now approaching the winter solstice, the darkest days of the year, the time when the light of the sun has almost faded, when our Northern Hemisphere is cold and drear. But on the longest and darkest night, the sun turns on its upward path, the Christ light is born on the earth again, and

all the world rejoices. By the terms of our analogy, however, when the Christ is born on earth He dies to heaven. As the free spirit is at the time of birth finally and firmly encased in the veil of flesh which fetters it all through life, so also the Christ Spirit is fettered and hampered each time He is born into the earth. This great Annual Sacrifice begins when our Christmas bells are ringing, when our joyful sounds of praise and thanksgiving are ascending to heaven. Christ is imprisoned in the most literal sense of the word from Christmas to Easter.

Men may scorn the idea that there is an influx of spiritual life and light at this time of the year, nevertheless, the fact remains whether we believe it or not. Every one in the whole world at this time feels lighter, feels different, feels as if a load were lifted off his shoulders. The spirit of peace on earth and good will towards man prevails; the spirit that *we also would give* something expresses itself in Christmas gifts. This spirit is not to be denied, as is patent to anyone who is at all observant; and this is a reflex of the great divine wave of giving. God so loved the world that He gave His only or alone begotten Son. Christmas is the time of the giving, though it is not consummated until Easter; this is the crux, the

turning point, the place where we feel that something has happened which ensures the prosperity and continuance of the world.

How different is the feeling at Christmas from the one that is manifest at Easter! At the latter there is an outgoing desire, an energy which expresses iself in sex love with desire for perpetuation of self as the keynote; how different this is from the love which expresses itself in the spirit of giving that we find at Christmas time rather than that of receiving.

And look now at the churches; never does the candle burn so brightly as upon this, the shortest and the darkest day of the year. Never do the bells sound so festive as when they ring out their message to the waiting world, "The Christ is born."

"God is Light," says the inspired apostle, and no other description is capable of conveying so much of the nature of God as those three little words. The invisible light that is clothed in the flame upon the altar is an apt representation of God, the Father. In the bells we have an apt symbol of Christ, the Word, for their metal tongues proclaim the gospel message of peace and good will, while the incense brings an added spiritual fervor, representing the power of

the Holy Spirit. The Trinity is thus symbolically part of the celebration which makes Christmas the most spiritually joyful time of the year from the standpoint of the human race which is now embodied and working in the physical world.

But it must not be forgotten, as was said in the opening paragraph of this letter, that the birth of Christ upon earth is the death of Christ to the glory of heaven; that at the time when we rejoice at His annual coming, He is invested again with the heavy physical load which we have crystallized about ourselves and which is now our dwelling place—the earth. In this heavy body He is then encrusted, and anxiously He waits for the day of final liberation. You understand, of course, there are days and nights for the greater spirits as for the human beings; that as we live in our body during the daytime, work out the destiny which we have created for ourselves in the physical world, and are then liberated at night into the higher world to recuperate, so also there is this ebb and flow of the Christ Spirit. It dwells within our earth a part of the year and then withdraws into the higher worlds. Thus Christmas is for Christ the commencement of a day of physical life, the beginning of a period of restriction.

What then should be the aspiration of the devout and enlightened mystic who realizes the greatness of His sacrifice, the greatness of this gift which is being bestowed upon mankind by God at this time of the year; who realizes this sacrifice of the Christ for our sake, this giving Himself, subjecting Himself to a virtual death that we may live, this wonderful love that is being poured out upon the earth at this time—what should be his aspiration? What but to imitate in however small a measure the wonderful works of God! He should aspire to make himself more the servant of the Cross than ever before, more closely to follow the Christ in every thing by sacrificing himself for his brothers and sisters, by uplifting humanity within his immediate sphere of work so as to hasten the day of liberation for which the Christ Spirit is waiting, groaning and travailing. We mean the *permanent* liberation, the day and the coming of Christ.

To realize this aspiration in the fullest measure, let us go forth during the coming year with full self-reliance and faith. If we have heretofore despaired of our ability to work for Christ, then let this despair pass, for has He not said: "Greater works than these shall ye do"? Would He who has the word of

truth, would he have said such things if it were not possible to realize them? All things are possible to them that love God. If we will really work in our own little sphere, not looking for the greater things until we have done the work close at hand, then we shall find that a wonderful soul growth may be attained, so that the people who are round about us shall see in us something which they may not be able to define but which will nevertheless be patent to them—they shall see that Christmas light, the light of the new-born Christ, shining within our sphere of action. It can be done; it only depends upon ourselves whether we will take Him at His word so as to realize this command: "Be ye therefore perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect." Perfection may seem a very long way off; we may realize more acutely as we look upon Him how far we are from living up to our ideals. Nevertheless, it is by striving daily, hourly, that we finally attain, and every day some little progress can be made, something can be done, in some way we can let our light shine so that men shall see it as a beacon light in the darkness of the world. May God help us during the coming year to attain a greater measure of Christ-likeness than we have ever

before attained. May we live such lives that when another year has rolled around and we again see the candle lights of Christmas and hear the bells that call us to the Holy Night service, we shall then feel that we have not lived in vain.

Each time we give ourselves in service to others we add to the lustre of our soul bodies, which are built of ether. It is the Christ ether that now floats this sphere of ours, and let us remember that if we ever want to work for His liberation, we must in sufficient numbers evolve our own soul bodies to the point where they may float the earth. Thus we may take up His burden and save Him the pain of physical existence.

IV

The Mystic Midnight Sun

Exoterically the sun has been worshiped as the giver of life from time immemorial, because the multitude was incapable of looking beyond the material symbol of a great spiritual truth. But besides those who adored the heavenly orb which is seen with the physical eye, there has always been and there is today a small but increasing minority, a priesthood consecrated by righteousness rather than by rites, who saw and see the eternal spiritual verities behind the temporal and evanescent forms which clothe these verities in changing raiment of ceremonial, according to the times and the people to whom they were originally given. For them the legendary Star of Bethlehem shines each year as a Mystic Midnight Sun, which enters our planet at the winter solstice and then commences to radiate from the center of our globe, Life, Light, and Love, the three divine attributes. These rays of spiritual splendor and power fill our globe

with a supernal light that envelops every one upon earth from the least to the greatest without respect of persons. But all cannot partake of this wonderful gift in the same measure; some get more, some less, and some, alas! seem to have no share in the great love offering which the Father has prepared for us in His only begotten Son, because they have not yet developed the spiritual magnet, *the Christ child* within, which alone can guide us unto the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

"What profits it the Sun doth shine,
Had I not eyes to see?
How shall I know the Christ is mine
Save through the Christ in me?
That soundless voice within my heart
Is earnest of the pact
'Twixt Christ and me—it does impart
To faith the force of *Fact.*"

This is a mystic experience which will no doubt ring true to many among our students, for it is as literally true as that night follows day and winter follows summer. Unless we have the Christ within ourselves, unless that wonderful pact of blood brotherhood has been consummated, we can have no part in the Savior, and so far as we are concerned it would not matter though the Christmas bells never ring.

But when the Christ has been formed in ourselves, when the immaculate conception has become a reality in our own hearts, when we have stood there at the birth of the Christ child and offered our gifts, dedicating the lower nature to the service of the Higher Self, then and then only, the Christmas feast is spread for us from year to year. And the harder we have toiled in the Master's vineyard, the more clearly and distinctly shall we hear that soundless voice within our hearts issue the invitation: "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you . . for my yoke is easy and my burden light." Then we shall hear a new note in the Christmas bells such as we have never heard before, for in all the years there is no day so glad as the day when the Christ is born anew into the earth, bringing with Him gifts to the children of men—gifts that mean the continuance of physical life; for without that vitalizing, energizing influence of the Christ Spirit the earth would remain cold and drear, there would be no new song of spring, no little woodland choristers to gladden our hearts at the approach of summer; the icy grip of Boreas would hold the earth fettered and mute forever, making it impossible for us to continue our ma-

terial evolution which is so necessary to teach us to use the power of thought in the proper creative channels.

The Christmas spirit is thus a living reality to all who have evolved the Christ *within.* The average man or woman feels it only around the holidays, but the illumined mystic sees and feels it months before and months after the culminating point on Holy Night. In September there is a change in the earth's atmosphere; a light begins to glow in the heavens; it seems to pervade the whole solar universe; gradually it grows more intense and seems to envelop our globe; then it penetrates the surface of the planet and gradually concentrates itself in the center of the earth where the group spirits of the plants make their homes. On Holy Night it attains its minimum size and maximum brilliancy. Then it begins to radiate the light concentrated, and gives new life to the earth wherewith to carry on the activities of nature during the coming year.

This is the beginning of the great cosmic drama *"From the Cradle to the Cross,"* which is enacted annually during the winter months.

Cosmically the sun is born on the longest and darkest night of the year when Virgo, the Celestial Virgin, stands upon the eastern horizon at midnight to

bring forth the immaculate child. During the months next following, the sun passes through the violent sign of Capricorn where, mythically, all the powers of darkness are concentrated in a frantic endeavor to kill the Light-bearer, a phase of the solar drama which is mystically presented in the story of King Herod and the flight into Egypt to escape death.

When the sun enters the sign Aquarius, the waterman, in February, we have the time of rain and storms; and as the baptism mystically consecrates the Savior to his work of service, so also the floods of moisture that descended upon the earth soften and mellow it so that it may yield the fruits whereby the lives of those who dwell here are preserved.

Then comes the sun's passage through the sign Pisces, the fishes. At this time the stores of the preceding year have been almost consumed and man's food is scarce. Therefore we have the long fast of Lent which mystically represents for the aspirant the same ideal as that cosmically shown by the sun. There is at this time the *carne-vale,* the farewell to the flesh, for everyone who aspires to the higher life must at some time bid farewell to the lower nature with all its desires and prepare himself for the passover which is then near.

In April, when the sun *crosses* the celestial equator and enters the sign Aries, the Lamb, the cross stands as a mystic symbol of the fact that the candidate to the higher life must learn to lay down the mortal coil and begin the ascent of Golgotha, *the place in the skull;* thence to cross the threshold into the invisible world. Finally, in imitation of the sun's ascent into the northern heavens, he must learn that his place is with the Father and that ultimately he is to ascend to that exalted place. Furthermore, as the sun does not stay in that high degree of declination but cyclically descends again toward the autumn equinox and winter solstice to complete the circle again and again for the benefit of humanity, so also everyone who aspires to become a Cosmic Character, a savior of mankind, must be prepared to offer himself as a sacrifice again and again for his fellow men.

This is the great destiny that is before every one of us; each one is a Christ-in-the-making, if he will be, for as Christ said to His disciples: "He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also . . . and greater." Moreover, according to the maxim, "Man's necessity is God's opportunity", there never was so great an opportunity to imitate the Christ, to do the work that He did, as there is today when the

whole continent of Europe is in the throes of a world-war and the grandest of all Christmas carols, "On earth peace, good will toward men," seems to be further than ever from its realization. We have the power within ourselves to hasten the day of peace, by talking, thinking, and living PEACE, for the concerted action of thousands of people does carry an impression to the Race Spirit when it is there directed, especially when the moon is in Cancer, Scorpio, or Pisces, which are the three great psychic signs best suited to occult work of this nature. Let us use the two and one-half days during which the moon is in each of these signs for the purpose of meditation upon peace—peace on earth and among men good will. But in so doing let us be sure that we *do not take sides* for or against any of the battling nations; let us remember at all times that everyone of their members is our brother. One is entitled to our love as much as another. Let us hold the thought that what we want is to see *Universal Brotherhood* lived upon earth, namely peace on earth and among men good will regardless of whether the combatants were born on one side or the other of an imaginary line drawn upon the map, regardless of whether they express themselves in this, that, or the other tongue.

Let us pray that peace may come upon earth; everlasting peace, and good will among all men, irrespective of all differences of race, creed, color, or religion. In the measure that we succeed in voicing *with our hearts,* not with our lips only, this impersonal prayer for peace, shall we further the Kingdom of Christ, for remember that eventually that is where we are all bound for,—*the kingdom of the heavens* where the Christ is "King of kings and Lord of lords."

V

The Mission of Christ And The Festival of The Fairies

Whenever we are confronted by one of nature's mysteries which we are at a loss to explain, we simply add a new name to our vocabulary which we then use in learned juggling to hide our ignorance of the subject. Such are the ampere which we use to measure the volume of the electric current, the volt which we say indicates the strength of the current, and the ohm which we use to show what resistance a given conductor offers to the passage of the current. Thus by much study of words and figures, the master minds of the electrical science attempt to persuade themselves and others that they have fathomed the mysteries of the elusive force which plays such an important part in the world's work; but when all is said and they are in a confidential mood, they admit that the brightest lights of the electrical science know but very little more than the schoolboy who is just beginning to experiment with his cells and batteries.

Similarly in the other sciences, anatomists cannot distinguish the canine from the human embryo for a

long time, and while the physiologist talks learnedly about metabolism, he cannot escape the admission that the laboratory tests whereby he endeavors to imitate our digestive processes must be and are widely different from the transmutations undergone in the chemical laboratory of the body in the nourishment we take. This is not said to disparage or belittle the wonderful achievements of science but to emphasize the fact that there are factors behind all manifestations of nature—intelligences of varying degrees of consciousness, builders and destroyers, who perform important parts in the economy of nature—and until these agencies are recognized and their work studied, we can never have an adequate conception of the way the nature forces work, which we call heat, electricity, gravity, chemical action, etc. To those who have cultivated the spiritual sight, it is evident that the so-called dead spend part of their time in learning to build bodies under the guidance of certain spiritual hierarchies. They are the agents in the metabolic and anabolic processes; they are the unseen factors in assimilation, and it is therefore literally true that we should be unable to live save for this important aid from those we call dead.

To grasp the idea of how these agencies work and their relation to us, we may recall an illustration used in the Cosmo: Suppose that a mechanic is at work making a table, and a dog, which is an evolving spirit belonging to another life wave, sits watching him. It then sees the process of cutting the boards; gradually the table is formed from the material, and at last it is finished. But though the dog has watched the man work, it has no clear conception of how this has been done nor of the ultimate use of the table. Suppose further that the dog were gifted with only a limited vision, hence unable to perceive the workman and his tools; then it would have seen the boards gradually falling apart in certain places, then joined and assembled in another manner until the table took shape and was finished. It would see the process of formation and the finished product but would have no conception of the fact that the active agency of a workman was necessary to transform the lumber to a table. If it could speak, it might explain the origin of the table as Topsy did her own by saying that it "just growed."

Our relation to the nature forces is similar to that of the dog to the invisible workman, and we also are

apt to explain nature's mysteries as Topsy did. We learnedly tell the child how heat from the sun evaporates the water of the rivers and oceans, causing it to ascend to the cooler regions of the air where it condenses to clouds which finally become so saturated with moisture that they gravitate towards the earth as rain to replenish the rivers and oceans and be again evaporated. It is all perfectly simple, a nice automatic perpetual motion process. But is that all? Are there not a number of holes in this theory? We know that there are, though we can not digress too far from our subject to discuss them. One thing is lacking to fully explain it, namely, the semi-intelligent action of the sylphs who lift the finely divided vaporized particles of water prepared by the undines, from the surface of the sea and carry them as high as they may before partial condensation takes place and clouds are formed. These particles of water they keep until forced by the undines to release them. When we say it storms, battles are being fought on the surface of the sea and in the air, sometimes with the aid of salamanders to light the lightning torch of separated hydrogen and oxygen and send its awe-inspiring shaft crashing zig-zag through the inky darkness, followed by ponderous peals of thunder that rever-

berate in the clearing atmosphere, while the undines triumphantly hurl the rescued raindrops to earth that they may be again restored to union with their mother element.

The little gnomes are needed to build the plants and the flowers. It is their work to tint them with the innumerable shades of color which delight our eyes. They also cut the crystals in all the minerals and make the priceless gems that gleam from golden diadems. Without them there would be no iron for our machinery nor gold wherewith to pay for it. They are everywhere and the proverbial bee is not busier. To the bee, however, is given credit for the work it does, while the little nature spirits that play such an immensely important part in the world's work are unknown save to a few so-called dreamers or fools.

At the summer solstice the physical activities of nature are at their apex or zenith, therefore "Midsummer Night" is the great festival of the fairies who have wrought to build the material universe, nourished the cattle, nurtured the grain, and are hailing with joy and thanksgiving the crest wave of force which is their tool in shaping the flowers into the astonishing variety of delicate shapes called for by their

archetypes and tinting them in unnumbered hues which are the artist's delight and despair.

On this greatest of all nights of the glad summer season they flock from fen and forest, from glen and dale, to the Festival of the Fairies. They really bake and brew their etheric foods and afterwards dance in ecstacies of joy—the joy of having brought forth and served their important purpose in the economy of nature.

It is an axiom of science that nature tolerates nothing that is useless, parasites and drones are an abomination; the organ that has become superfluous atrophies, so does the limb or eye that is no longer used. Nature has work to do and requires work of all who would justify their existence and continue as part of her. This applies to plant and planet, man and beast, and to the fairies as well. They have their work to do; they are busy folk and their activities are the solution to many of nature's multifarious mysteries, as already explained.

We are now at the other pole of the yearly cycle, where the days are short and the nights long; physically speaking, darkness hangs over the Northern Hemisphere, but the wave of spiritual light and life

which will be the basis of next year's growth and progress is now at its greatest height and power. On Christmas night at the winter solstice when the celestial sign of the Immaculate Virgin stands upon the eastern horizon at midnight, the sun of the new year is born to save humanity from the cold and the famine which would ensue were its beneficent light withheld. At that time the Christ Spirit is born into the earth and commences to leaven and fertilize the millions of seeds which the fairies build and water that we may have physical food. But "man shall not live by bread alone." Important as is the work of the fairies, it fades into insignificance compared with the mission of Christ, who brings to us each year the spiritual food needed to advance us upon the path of progress, that we may attain perfection in love with all which that implies.

It is the advent of this wonderful love light that we symbolize by the lighted lamps on the altar and the ringing of the Christmas bells which each year announce the glad tidings of the Savior's birth, for to the spiritual sense, light and sound are inseparable; the light is colored and the sound is modified according to vibratory pitch. The Christmas light that

shines on earth is golden, inducing the feelings of altruism, joy, and peace which not even the great war could entirely obliterate.

The war is past, and as we always value that most which we have missed, it is to be hoped that all mankind will unite this Christmas in the song of songs, "On Earth Peace, Good Will Toward Men."

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